(b) whether Government are reconsidering to put a ban on indiscreet import of agricultural produces which are adversely affecting Indian farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) The prices of some of the agricultural commodities have declined during the year, for various reasons. Being a signatory to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), India is committed to the removal of all non-tariff barriers, *inter alia*, on the import and export of agricultural commodities *viz.* quantitative restrictions, export/ import licensing etc. This is in the process of being phased out. As such *w.e.f.* the 1st April, 2001, the import of agricultural commodities shall be regulated only through the imposition of appropriate tariffs thereon. The tariff levels have been bound by India for the primary agricultural products, processed agricultural products and edible oils with a few exceptions at 100%, 150% and 300% respectively. There is thus, considerable flexibility under WTO agreement on agriculture for imposing appropriate tariffs on import of agricultural products within the bound levels for protecting the interests of farmers.

Rescue package of NERAMAC

1263. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the list of establishment and details of ongoing programme of North Eastern Region Agriculture and Marketing Corporation;

(b) whether a 10.36 cr. Rescue package of NERAMAC was considered by Government;

(c) if so, details of the package and its implementation status;

(d) whether dismal performance of NERAMAC in the recent past was evaluated; and

(e) if so, outcome thereof and action contemplated to activate the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) The list of establishments of North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC) is as under:

(i) Registered/Head Office: R.G. Barua Road, Ganeshguri, Guwahati—781005.

(ii) Fruit Juice Concentration Plant, Nalkata, Tripura.

(iii) Cashewnut Processing Plant, Agartala.

(iv) Zonal Offices: Guwahati, Imphal and Agartala.

(v) Sales outlets: Guwahati Airport, Agartala Airport, Agartala Industrial Estate, Agartala Secretariat.

The ongoing programmes of NERAMAC are as under:—

(i) Trading and marketing of ginger, true potato seeds, chillies, supari, fertilizers and seeds.

(ii) Production of processed cashewnut at the Cashew Processing Unit, Agartala.

(iii) Repairing of aseptic packaging unit at Fruit Juice Concentration Plant, Nalkata (Tripura).

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The main items of package are: Plant and Machinery (Rs. 3.75 crores), Pre-operative Expenses (Rs.1 crore), Pressing Creditors (Rs. 1.01 crores), Training (Rs. 22 lakhs), Contingencies (Rs. 38 lakhs), Working Capital (Rs. 3.20 crores) and VRS (Rs. 80 lakhs), and writing down the equity by Rs. 1.22 crores to restructure the balance sheet as on March 31st, 1998 so as to bring down the accumulated losses as on that date to zero. The Rehabilitation scheme envisages upgrading of the existing facilities for Pineapple and Cashew processing plant, overhauling and maintenance of existing plant and machinery in PSC unit, addition of ginger processing plant, offering Voluntary Retirement Scheme to surplus employees and training of personnel.

All actions like Release of Funds and providing Reliefs and Concessions (writing off the Loans, Interest and Capital subsidy, Writing Down Equity and Release of Subsidy Arrears) required to be taken at Government end, stand accomplished.

(d) and (e) The BIFR Package was formulated and approved after the past performance of NERAMAC was evaluated. Thereafter, a 10 year plan with effect from 1st April, 1999 has been worked out to ensure that the company is properly activated.

Use of ash for production of props

†1264. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.